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ABSTRACT

Bilingualism implies ability to use either of two languages without difficulty when necessary. Half a million Welshmen are in this position. Coordinate bilingualism, normally achieved through contact with two languages in early childhood, is perhaps the most desirable type of bilingualism. In compound bilingualism, one language continues to dominate when the other language is spoken. A century ago, minority languages like Welsh and Irish were suppressed in favor of stronger, more socially acceptable languages. This attitude has been replaced by a desire to preserve and develop national and minority languages. In many small nations, achievement of a linguistic equilibrium in bilingualism is regarded as a political, cultural and economic necessity. In an era of both nationalism and internationalism, several European countries are fostering their minority languages. For bilinguals, the national language answers community and cultural identity needs, while the international language serves for wider communication and advancement. Numerous studies showing that bilingual children have lower educational achievement may be unscientific. Evidence from Welsh dual-medium schools suggests that exposure to two languages at a very early age and continued education in two vernaculars is the best system. Bilingualism must also be encouraged in the community through state support and native-language television and radio programming. (CHK)

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BIILINGUALISM TODAY

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PROFESSOR JAC. L. WILLIAMS

A Realistic Aim:

... If these four conditions are met, I see no reason why at least 75% of the population of Wales and Ireland could not be bilingual by the end of the present century.

This is a realistic aim, but we must seek to reach it in earnest. If we cannot face this problem seriously, and with strong determination, we should not waste time on it".

BILINGUALISM TODAY

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Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge

There are people in Wales who are inclined to view bilingualism as a specifically Welsh problem, as if no other country were concerned with the task of teaching two languages to its children. There may be in Ireland also, people who are inclined to regard the problem of bilingualism as something that is specifically Irish. The views of such people are, in my opinion, somewhat parochial.

Their attitudes are liable to be governed by personal experiences, sometimes by personal handicaps arising out of their being monoglot in the bilingual situation in which they happen to live and work, sometimes indeed by personal gain that may have come their way as a result of their having knowledge of the two languages spoken in the country in which they live and work.

I shall not waste time by trying to enumerate the various definitions of bilingualism. We can assume for the purpose of this lecture that bilingualism implies ability to use either of two languages without any apparent difficulty whenever the need arises for the individual to use the one language or the other. That is the position in which some half a million Welshmen find themselves at the present time.

A Bilingual Person:

Bilingualism doesn't mean having absolutely equal competence in two languages. The bilingual person is liable to have a preferred language for specific purposes. There are many Welshmen who prefer the Welsh language as a language of worship and religious experience. The very same people may experience considerable difficulty in lecturing on a scientific topic, for example, in the Welsh language, even if that language happens to be their mother tongue. Such preferences follow from their being conditioned by their experience and environment to adopt certain linguistic habits. The truly bi-

lingual person is conditioned to express himself in all situations through the medium of two languages as occasion demands.

Neither does bilingualism imply that anyone should have complete mastery of two languages. In fact, it is extremely difficult for any individual to gain mastery of even one language. For most of us, the choice lies between gaining average command of one language or average command of two languages. And it seems to me, in the light of experience in Wales, that the average child is capable of gaining average command of two languages with very little more effort than is needed for the average child to gain average command of one language.

Alleged Handicap:

Occasionally, we come across parents or members of education committees who tell us that certain children or certain groups of children, have suffered some handicap in English because Welsh has been given such a prominent place in their education. But I have never seen any reliable and acceptable evidence in support of such views. One can take for example, a member of a local education committee in North Wales who drew attention to the fact that certain girls from his area had failed to become nurses in Liverpool because they had not qualified in English, and he alleged that this was due to their having spent so much time learning Welsh. *But there are in Liverpool itself many girls who fail to reach the necessary level of competence in the English language:* In fact, we have found in Wales that many children attending bilingual schools are inclined to make better progress in English than children attending monolingual schools. But it would be dishonest of me to claim here that their good progress in English is due to their receiving a bilingual education.

One Particular School:

There are so many other factors in the situation. In fact, I can think at this moment of a change that took place fairly

recently in one particular school in a Welsh-speaking area. The percentage of passes in English for some years was very low in that school. More recently, the percentage of passes in English has been exceptionally high and pupils have been taking the examination at the end of the fourth year instead of the fifth. There has been no change in the linguistic character of the area, no reduction in the use of Welsh in the school. The explanation is that there has been a change in the method of teaching English, an improvement in staffing and methodology. The former weakness and the present strength of pupils in English is not related to the bilingual character of the area, nor the bilingual policy of the school.

Coordinate and Compound Bilingualism:

No useful purpose would be served by trying to trace the steps along which the individual travels from monolingualism to bilingualism, nor to describe the different types of bilingualism that are to be found in individuals or in communities. But perhaps I should mention that I regard what is known as coordinate bilingualism as being the most desirable. That is the type of bilingualism normally achieved through *contact with two languages in early childhood*. Such bilingualism appears to have advantages over what is known as compound bilingualism, where the influence of *one language continues to dominate*, or at least to be apparent, when the other language is being spoken. The coordinate bilingual has succeeded in establishing a direct link between thinking and expression in two languages in the early years of life. Consequently, he experiences little difficulty in code-switching. When he speaks the one language he is apparently free from the influence of his other language. He seems to have two parallel, and quite distinct, patterns of verbal behaviour at his command. There are many children who can be regarded as coordinate bilinguals in Wales to-day. They have been conditioned to bilingualism in the early years of life.

Why Bother?

If we can accept co-ordinate bilingualism as the ideal, the problem for those who are concerned with the development of bilingual education is how this kind of bilingualism can be achieved with the *minimum of effort* on the part of both learner and teacher. That is the basic problem in bilingual education once the ideal is accepted.

But why bother about bilingualism at all? It is a fact that bilingualism has acquired a new significance in society and in education in our time, not only in Wales and in Ireland but at international level. A hundred years ago, bilingualism was almost invariably regarded as a stage of transition, something that was to last for one generation or two generations, or at most, three generations, while a community was in the process of shedding one language and adopting another. That was happening here in Ireland and in the Industrial areas of Wales in the nineteenth century. It was happening on a considerable scale in nations states almost everywhere. Wherever there was a minority speaking a language, that could be regarded as its own, not that of the state as a whole, the tendency was for that minority to be absorbed in the majority speaking another language, with the state seeking to promote linguistic uniformity. The same thing was happening in the colonies where native social climbers were anxious to adopt the language of the imperial power and shed their own. We had plenty of such people in Wales until very recently. The desire of the Welsh-speaking middle class parent to bring up his children to be Welsh-speakers is a very recent development. The disappearance of minority languages from the U.S.A. in favour of the English language was considered essential in the interests of integration. The decline and death of a language was often desired by people who were speaking that language, even when it was a language like Irish or Welsh, with a literary heritage extending over many centuries. That was a feature of nine-

teenth century political life, a feature of the age of imperialism. By to-day such an attitude has become out of date. *It does not belong to the present century.* It has been replaced by a widely scattered desire to preserve national languages and minority languages wherever they exist; and not only to preserve, but even to develop and to restore.

Twentieth Century Attitude:

It is very difficult to fix on any particular date when this change took place. It may well be that the Russian Revolution of 1917 had much to do with the change. Soviet language policy, developed at that time, paid attention to the rights of national and minority groups. Even languages that had not had an alphabet were used for the first time as media of education. This movement has been spreading steadily from wherever it started, and during the present century there has been a linguistic revolution as well as a social revolution, reaching international proportions, with the result that today there is at international level respect not only for the rights of the individual person but also respect for the rights of the individual national group and for the individual linguistic group, irrespective of size and political power. There has developed an entirely new attitude towards minority language.

This change could be illustrated at length by quoting from Welsh publications. I shall confine myself to one quotation from a pamphlet issued by the Welsh Department of the Ministry of Education in 1948. Some of you may know that there was published in 1847 a series of reports condemning the use of the Welsh language in the schools of Wales and suggesting that its existence was a vast drawback to the Welsh people. The Minister of Education in the British Labour Government in a Preface to an official pamphlet, published in 1948, stated: "This pamphlet looks back over the last one

hundred years, and should serve to remind us of the great strides that have been made since 1847. Then three able commissioners could denounce the influence of the Welsh language on the moral and economic progress of the Welsh people. That position is no longer tenable. On the contrary, I believe that the language, the history, the traditions of Wales are the priceless heritage of all Welsh children." I think that the word "all" was used there deliberately. He did not mean that knowledge of the national language of Wales should remain the privilege of those who were still speaking it, some twenty percent of the children of Wales, those who had, by accident of birth, been brought up in Welsh speaking homes. He stated that it should be made available again to *all* Welsh children. His was the voice of the enlightened twentieth century politician.

T. S. Eliot:

About the same time, T. S. Eliot, an eminent man of letters with an international outlook, was thinking about the same problem. He published his views in a volume entitled "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture" where he maintains that it would be a loss, not *only* to the culture of Wales, but even to the culture of England, if the Welsh language were allowed to wither and to die at the present time. He suggested that it would be extremely difficult for Wales to preserve any measure of national identity if the language were to be allowed to disappear. His was the voice of the forward looking twentieth century cultured man—so very different from the attitude of Mathew Arnold, so typical of the nineteenth century, and also involved in education when he wrote. "They are not the true friends of the Welsh people who, from a romantic interest in traditions, would impede an event which is socially and politically so desirable for them. Tourists and traders do excellent service by pushing the English wedge further and further into the heart of the Principality, Ministers for Educa-

tion by hammering it harder and harder into the elementary schools." Those were the days in which the Irish language and the Welsh language declined, despised and abandoned by so many of their speakers.

Practical, Not Emotional:

But the attitude has changed, *Matthew Arnold referred to "romantic interest in traditions". I am a practical man in my educational outlook.* I am not governed by emotionalism in my attitude to the Welsh language and to the teaching of it. I was at one time a lecturer in a Technical College concerned with problems of production and distribution, of organisation and administration. There are too many people in Wales who appear to me to be governed by emotionalism in their attitude towards the Welsh language. There are still a few who even present romantic dreams of a unilingual Welsh-speaking Wales. But I have long been convinced that problems such as the problem of saving the life of a national language cannot be solved at emotional level. Such a problem cannot be solved by singing hymns in Wales or folk songs in Ireland. We must get down to the hard foundation of serious and practical thinking, and sound planning if we are to develop a sound linguistic policy.

We Live In a Century of Nationalism:

And let us remind ourselves that this is not a problem which concerns us alone. So many of the small nations of the world are confronted with a similar problem today. Bilingualism is the only means of satisfying their linguistic needs at the present-time, the second half of the twentieth century. The achievement of a linguistic equilibrium in bilingualism is coming to be regarded in many parts of the world as a political, cultural and economic necessity, maybe almost a condition of living a satisfactory national life by the end of the twentieth century.

I use the word "national" deliberately. It is more meaningful than it has ever been in terms of the privileges and obligations arising from the fact that so many nations today are conscious of their nationhood and also at the same time conscious of their international obligations. *Nationalism and internationalism are the two great political factors of this century.* The twentieth century in which we have the great privilege of living, is a century of nationalism. It is also a century of internationalism. Nationalism is a spirit that has led the nations of the world to safeguard and to develop their own individual languages and their individual personalities as nations. The spirit of internationalism has encouraged them, during the same exciting century, to look for command of an international language in addition to their own.

One-Language Person Out of Date:

We have seen great changes in attitudes towards minority languages even within nation states. In Europe today states in general, with two exceptions, have abandoned the old 19th century policy of trying to enforce one language, and one language only, upon all their citizens. This change has come fairly recently. We are very much aware of this in Wales where the British Ministry of Education, now known as the Department of Education and Science, has so often reminded those of us who happen to be teachers or educational administrators in Wales of our duty towards our own language. It was only as recently as 1947 that the first official Welsh-medium school, maintained by a local education authority for the specific purpose of developing pupils ability to use the Welsh language, was opened in Wales.

Bilingual Soviets:European Countries:

If we look further afield, we see that every Scandinavian country now has a group of minority language schools some-

where within its educational system. Holland has developed dual-medium schools in Friesland in the post-war period. West Germany has recognised the linguistic rights of the Schleswig Danes, East Germany has promoted the survival of Wendish. In Yugoslavia, where no linguistic group consists of more than 30% of the population, the linguistic rights of all minorities are recognised and respected. The incidence of bilingualism is so wide-spread that even in Europe there is only one country to my knowledge without some kind of bilingual problem needing recognition in its education and broadcasting services. I have already referred to the language policy of the Soviet Union as established immediately after the 1917 revolution.

More recently other countries coming under the influence of Soviet thinking have adopted similar language policies and seek to develop local languages and to promote widespread knowledge of Russian at the same time. Even the United States of America has not escaped the impact of this new outlook on language-preservation and language-teaching. A strong desire to develop, to study and to preserve what is called "The Language Resources of Ethnic Groups" has manifested itself in recent years and speakers of languages other than English in the United States are now being encouraged to preserve, and even to reinforce, the linguistic resources that they have.

English In Partnership:

We see, if we look around us to other countries, the extent to which the 19th century policy of suppressing the language of a conquered people has been abandoned almost completely in favour of an ever-growing recognition of the rights of nations to preserve and to develop their own national personalities as well as their own economic resources. Britain has not been by passed by this world movement. The change is reflected not

only in a more sympathetic attitude towards Welsh in Wales or Gaelic in Scotland, but also in the policy of the British Council, which does not seek to push the English language anywhere at the expense of local languages. The aim is to spread knowledge of the English language in partnership with other languages already spoken in areas where the Council functions.

One World-Language Idea Out of Date:

The view that is desirable to have one world-wide language seems to be very much out of date by now. Most of us here know how such a view was held even by patriots and nationalists in Wales and Ireland even less than a hundred years ago. There were many good Welshmen who believed then that it would be a very good thing if the Welsh language were to die "by tomorrow morning". Those were the words they used. The language was regarded as a hindrance, not an asset. But by today the Welshman who wishes to see the Welsh language die has become very rare indeed. Welshmen who would like to see the language live but who are not prepared to do very much about it are, of course, still numerous.

Five World-Languages:

So far, in referring to other countries, I have referred to what we may regard as the old established nations. But the interesting fact is that so many emergent nations, such as the nations of Africa, are also very much involved in this problem. They do not wish to bear the linguistic badge of imperial conquest, whether it be English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, or any other power, upon them forever. They wish to preserve their own cultural heritages and to promote the development of indigenous languages, but at the same time they need to gain command of one of those International languages that are so valuable for their national well-being. And they are looking towards other nations for leadership.

It may well be that countries such as Wales and Ireland can give a very valuable lead to such nations today if they can show them how this problem of presenting widespread knowledge of live languages can be solved.

Two Languages a Need:

There are between 3,000 and 5,000 languages in the world. Not many of them can satisfy all the linguistic needs of the peoples who speak them. The number of international languages are very few. There may not be more than five at the present time. All languages other than these five can be regarded as vernacular, admirable for use locally but inadequate for attaining to the full benefits, economic and cultural, that are available to every nation living in the twentieth century. It follows that a very large number of people today, millions of us, need to have command of two languages, with the *two languages serving different purposes* in our personal and cultural lives. The one language, the national language, is the one that has been associated with the growth of the national community to its present stage of maturity. It is that language that provides the community with roots, gives it self-respect, among the nations of the world.

The other language opens doors, doors of communication, doors that open on to wide fields of knowledge and cultural experiences. Even in small countries where the language is in no danger at all, such as some of the Scandinavian countries, there is still need for a widespread measure of bilingualism. Such is the nature of the modern world in which we are living.

Our Problem Comparatively Simple:

Our problem in Wales and Ireland is comparatively simple. All we need is courage and will-power to face it with confidence and with both feet firmly on the ground. We are inclined to make very heavy weather of our problems, but in both cases

we have languages that are very well developed as national languages, with a glorious heritage behind them, and we also have ready access to an international language, probably the finest international language that is a practical proposition for any small nation. Our problem is not great. And yet we find that it is a little difficult at this point in our history to do our duty in relation to our respective national languages. Command of the language that is primarily a means of communication comes fairly easy to all our citizens because there are so many external forces helping it to spread, almost helping it to take possession of us, at the expense of driving out the other language that has been so deeply ingrained in our national being. It is difficult to convince some of our own people of the value of the latter, even more difficult to present knowledge of it at a high level of efficiency. And yet it is so obvious that it is essential for consolidating and developing the group culture that gives meaning to nationhood in our respective countries.

Group Identification:

Knowledge of our national language needs to be spread throughout the whole community if it is to unite a nation. There is a tendency at this very moment in Wales for the Welsh language to divide the nation. And there are some people who wish to promote that division. They never miss an opportunity of drawing attention to it. But, if we succeed in spreading knowledge of the national language, it inevitably becomes an agent for the promotion of national unity, a means of group identification. It is somewhat strange that even people who do not speak the language so often acknowledge that primary role of language in so many ways. In Wales they put Welsh names on their houses, Welsh names on their children, Welsh names on streets even in areas where the language is not spoken even by a significant minority. One is liable to hear a person who does not speak the language, and whose parents did not

speak the language, refer to "Our Language" and he means the national language, the Welsh language of which he, due to place of birth and education, has no knowledge. Those who come to live among us also hold, maybe unconsciously, a similar view of the vital role of the national language in the national existence. English people who come to Wales and who wish to become integrated, to become one of us as it were, often set about learning the language although it may not be spoken to any significant extent in the area in which they may happen to live. If they take the opposite view and do not wish themselves or their children to become integrated with us in any way, and are *adamant in their determination that they and their children shall be English for ever*, they are liable to raise objections to the teaching of Welsh in Schools, and seek to get their children exempted from learning Welsh and from being examined in that subject. Denationalised Welshmen are liable to be found among their ranks. In this manner the language is being recognised both by our own people, and by those who come to live among us, as a symbol of nationhood, a means of group identification in the national community

Africa and India:

I have been invited to lecture on bilingualism but perhaps I can be allowed to note in passing that the linguistic problem is not a bilingual one everywhere. In many parts of the world there is a trilingual situation. There is a demand, for example, in parts of Africa, for a knowledge of the local language to preserve the local culture, to be followed by a knowledge of a language like Swahili as the area *lingua franca*, and beyond that bilingual stage there is need for widespread knowledge of the English language. In the same way, in parts of India we have the local language, Hindi as *lingua franca*, and the English language demanding a worthy place in the general pattern of education. Such problems are by no means uncom-

mon in many parts of the world. Although it is now generally recognised that there is such widespread need for bilingualism, very little research work of a truly scientific nature has been done to discover what effect, if any, a bilingual upbringing has on a child's development. Even less research work has been done with a view to discovering what is the best and quickest means of turning the monolingual child into a bilingual. The field most frequently ploughed by research workers on bilingualism has been that of comparative studies of the alleged effect of bilingual education or bilingual upbringing upon children.

Unscientific Findings Disproved:

In the overwhelming majority of these enquiries, and there are over a hundred of them, the factor of bilingualism has not been isolated from other factors in the total situation. In the majority of such enquiries it has been found that bilingual children get lower scores than monolingual children on certain tests of intelligence or educational attainment. But very often there are other factors of obvious relevance, that the research worker has not taken into consideration. Such factors are very often of a socio-economic nature. The bilingual sample has so often been taken from a lower social class, from homes with a lower cultural level. In fact many children included in bilingual samples tested for comparative purposes in such enquiries have been immigrant children or children of a conquered or deprived people, suffering from difficulties of acculturation, handicapped by an ever-present sense of political and social inferiority in comparison with the monolinguals. Furthermore, the tests used have very often been basically unsuitable for comparative enquiries because they have been standardized against a socio-economic background that is more similar to that of the monolingual group than to that of the bilingual group. The instruments used for testing and comparing are

therefore falling short of the requirements of a sound scientific investigation. Some of us in Wales have been inclined to be critical of this kind of investigation for some time, and the data collected for one well-known Welsh investigation were re-examined in the light of such criticism. The original investigation had indicated that the bilingual children were inferior to the monolingual in their scores. *But the research worker re-examined the data, taking just one of the factors overlooked into consideration, the father's occupation. When care was taken that the occupation of the father in the bilingual sample equalled that in the monolingual sample, differences between the two groups just disappeared.*

Irish Survey:

Accounts of such investigations have been collected by several research workers on bilingualism. One has recently been published as a prelude to an account of a study of certain limited aspects of bilingualism in primary education in Ireland. Important omissions are inevitable in such surveys and one should not question the sincerity of their authors. Perhaps I can illustrate my point by taking an example from the recently published Irish survey. It contains several references to a study by Mary Carrow of the linguistic functioning of bilingual and monolingual children. The survey reports, and quite correctly, that there was a higher incidence of speech disorder among bilinguals than among monoglots. The vital sentence in that report, in my view, is not quoted. Here it is:

"The fact that there was a large number of bilingual children who presented no difficulties suggests the possibility that the core of the problem was not in bilingualism per se but in the type of environment in which the child had been reared." That is the type of situation we have time and time again as a background to bilingualism. There may be factors in the environment to account for the apparently lower scores of bilinguals. Most

of the comparative research studies in bilingualism can be dismissed as being obviously unsatisfactory and unscientific, but I should not put too much weight on this fact, and most scientifically constructed enquiries and the large-scale comparative studies are much more inclined to favour the bilingual than the more numerous small scale enquiries.

1962 Findings—Bilingualism An Advantage:

Some of the better constructed enquiries in the United States of America, Africa, and in Canada have come to the conclusion that there is no acceptable scientific evidence that bilingualism affects the development of the child in the one way or the other. One of the enquiries that has been most scientifically constructed and administered in my view, comes to another conclusion. I am referring to that of *Peal and Lambert*, published in 1962, which came to the conclusion, on the evidence available that bilingualism is an advantage. In fact the authors went so far as to suggest that the question we should now be concerned with, is not "Is bilingualism an advantage?" but "Why does bilingualism bring advantage to the young child?" They suggest various reasons, but we have no time to examine them tonight.

Scapegoat—Pretended Exam Failures:

But there are still many who believe, quite sincerely, that bilingualism is a disadvantage. Among them are to be found many ordinary parents as well as persons whom, for lack of a better word, we can call "academics". Some are inclined to use bilingualism as a cover for some other weakness in pupil or teacher. Parents in Wales have been known to allege that their children have failed to pass into the secondary school because of a Welsh test. *But it is known in many cases that those children have not failed on the Welsh test. They have failed on other aspects of the examination as well, and in many cases.*

they have actually done better in the Welsh as second language test than in any other part of the examination. That is the kind of situation in which we find ourselves in relation to the attempt to give adequate recognition to Welsh in the schools of Wales. There is a tendency to blame Welsh for this and that. And of course, we are often told that it is very unfair that the national language should be a compulsory subject in the schools of Wales. The argument against a compulsory subject is very rarely applied to other subjects that are also compulsory in the school curriculum.

New 2-Medium Welsh Schools:

Perhaps I should refer now to a little enquiry that we conducted from Aberystwyth a few years ago into the scores of children attending a sample of new dual-medium schools, *Ysgolion Cymraeg* established during the years 1946-1956 in six urban English-speaking areas in Wales. Evidence forthcoming from that enquiry suggested that their pupils, who were receiving a bilingual education were ahead of children in schools in Wales in general in *language and arithmetic*. They were ahead of the children not only in Welsh, (one would expect that to be the case) but also in arithmetic and even in the English language. I hasten to add, in fairness to all, that I think that it would be quite unfair of me to claim any advantage for bilingual education as such in that enquiry. It is highly probable that those pupils of *Ysgolion Cymraeg* gained higher scores in the English language than children attending normal English-medium schools because they came *from homes where there was a particular interest in education*. They probably came from homes where there were good English books lying around, where there were good English newspapers being read, good programmes on radio and television listened to and viewed and where there was a general attitude favourable to education. It is highly probable that such factors in the cultural back-

ground accounted for the higher scores of children receiving a bilingual education. Their apparent superiority in intelligence and attainment may have had no causal link with their bilingualism. As I have hinted before, it is extremely difficult to isolate the factor of bilingualism in any cultural or educational situation.

Improving Teaching of English:

It may be that I am expected to refer to the recent Irish study and its main conclusions. All I need say is that I cannot see in it any acceptable evidence of a causal relationship between the comparatively low scores of Irish children in English in comparison with the scores in English of certain children in Britain and the amount of school time devoted to the Irish language. There may be other factors in this situation too. It is not for me to suggest what they may be. It is highly probable that if the methods of teaching English in Ireland were improved that that difference would disappear. It may well be, too, that if other tests were used that such a difference would not manifest itself now. I know very well how the eleven-plus examination affected the type of linguistic training that my own children received in Wales. Having got that type of education they would do full justice to themselves in a Moray House English test. But they would probably get low scores on a different type of English test calling for a more creative literary approach.

Is Third Language Easier for Bilinguals?

It is sometimes claimed by the supporters of bilingual education that knowledge of two languages helps one to acquire a third. It does not seem to me fair to make any such claim for bilingual education on evidence as yet unavailable. All I can say is that in a little experiment conducted at Aberystwyth, under the auspices of the University Department of Education, in the teaching of German to bilingual children

aged 8—10, the results were most encouraging and satisfactory. Bilingual children aged eight made very good progress in a third language, but, again, I should not claim that they were making good progress because they were already bilingual, although it is highly probable that they had certain advantages over monoglots in such factors as pronunciation.

Foreign Languages:

If I am expected to express an opinion as to whether a foreign language should be introduced into primary education in Ireland, all I wish to state is that I consider that it would be quite inappropriate for an Irish or Welsh child to be given instruction in a foreign language before he has gained reasonable command of the two languages of the country in which he lives. If the teaching of French or any other foreign language is going to be introduced into the schools of Wales or Ireland as a result of our joining the Common Market, I sincerely hope that bilingual children will be given priority, when foreign language instruction is made available, that nobody will take the view "French or Welsh", "French or Irish". To me there is something immoral about compelling a child to choose between learning his own national language and a foreign language.

Nursery Schools: Over the Linguistic Barrier:

At the moment, we are making progress in Wales with the establishing of Welsh-medium nursery schools. I understand that 14 new Welsh nursery schools were opened on a voluntary basis at the beginning of this school term. Their educational aim is to get young children over the linguistic barrier between monoglotism and bilingualism before they enter the junior school, so that they will then be able to receive part of their education through the medium of Welsh and part of it through the medium of English, *from the age of six onwards*. It may seem a little strange to some members of this large

audience that the Irish study to which I referred is being used as evidence in favour of this development, because it has shown, and I quote; "that there is a significant tendency for the Irish quotient to increase as the use of Irish increases". We hope to give these young children two vernaculars at a young age, at the nursery school stage in their educational development, and then to continue the natural development of these two vernaculars as natural languages from there on throughout the junior school and secondary school and also at college level. And we have in progress in the University Department where I happen to work, a little research experiment which aims at discovering *what activities* should be used with young children to enable them to get over this important linguistic hurdle with the minimum of effort. It may be that the most pressing problem in bilingual education is to discover at what point in the development of the child and through the medium of what educational activities we should aim at a transfer from monoglotism to bilingualism.

Two-Vernacular System:

Evidence available from Wales suggests that this very young age is the right age for such bridging. From then on the two languages should be developed side by side through being used as media of education. The system is best described as a two-vernacular system, rather than a first-language and second-language system. Language is learnt almost everywhere under some kind of social pressure. Social pressure is the essence of motivation in early language learning. Why does the child learn his first language? He learns under social pressure from the group in which he lives, from the family with whom he wishes to communicate, from his mother and his father. If they speak one language to him he learns that language and that language only. If he is in a *situation where he needs to have two languages in order to communicate with the people who*

matter to him, in the environment in which he lives, he learns the two without apparent effort. That is what happened in the case of my own children, where one parent spoke the one language and the other spoke the other to them. They developed in that way and do not remember a time when they were not bilingual. *That is quite easily done*, but I should admit that ours is in some ways an abnormal family unit, in the sense that I was sufficiently concerned about the Welsh language to speak it to the children and not use the other language which I had to use to my wife for obvious reasons. The result is that the children have always been bilingual, and very soon their mother became bilingual as well. That does not happen as often as it might in a bilingual country.

Something very similar can happen in a school. It has happened to children of some well known people, such as the Canadian neurologist Wildor Penfield, a firm believer in early bilingualism. He arranged that his children should speak one language to their parents and another language to others in the household, so that they should be bilingual from the cradle. Then, at the age of four, they were sent to a French-medium school. Before they reached the age of six they were fluently trilingual and never mixed their languages.

Bilingual in Nine Months:

Something similar happens, in Welsh-medium nursery schools. The child entering a nursery school at the age of four does not know that he can live quite happily in Wales today without speaking a word of Welsh—he can get on without knowing the language even in what we call the Welsh-speaking areas. *But when he finds himself in the closed community of a small Welsh-medium nursery school, one of less than twenty perhaps*, where he is expected to speak Welsh, where the teacher gives a lead and where Welsh is the language of the group, under that social pressure he acquires a knowledge

of the new language in from 6 to 9 months. By examining child group activities, research workers at Aberystwyth hope to find out what are the activities that are really relevant in this situation, and what child activities are the most productive for second language learning. Up to now we have been guessing to a very considerable extent. But even with this guess work the system has been succeeding and scores of children in Wales have become bilingual under this kind of social pressure and group experience. So much for the schools situation.

Keeping Them Bilingual—the Environment:

Our duty in relation to the promotion of bilingualism to the point of school-leaving does not end there. We have to proceed a stage further and provide the type of environment in which bilingualism can flourish. There is not much point in getting children bilingual and keeping them bilingual up to a certain age and then letting them lose competence in one of their two languages. In the preservation of competence *the environment has a vital part to play*. Each language has to be given status, given freedom to live and conditions that are favourable to its further development. Certain languages are in a weaker position than others, for historical and political reasons. Languages such as ours at the moment, our national languages in Wales and Ireland, need a good measure of support from the state, the political manifestation of nationhood. That is why the State and local education authorities need to promote the production of books of a high standard in our respective languages. State support is necessary and the ordinary citizen should ensure that it is forthcoming.

TV:

There has developed recently a very valuable aid to the Welsh language—television. We sometimes complain that television is not doing as much for the Welsh language in

Wales as it might. The output at present is about 12 hours per week.

This medium has carried the language into homes where it has *not been heard for two or three generations* and it is having a fairly warm welcome there. Television programmes are not being switched off as radio was in unilingual times because there are pictures to be seen. *People continue to look at the screen.* They know what a programme is about. They get to know a little bit more. They get interested and in due course become to feel that they are partly bilingual. It is worth reporting here that some two years ago we conducted a little enquiry in Aberystwyth into the reasons why adults attend learning-Welsh classes. We asked some hundreds of learners why they bothered to attend a learning-Welsh class, and the reason that came out on top was, "*In order to understand more of the Welsh television programmes*". In television we have a medium of mass communication that is potentially a valuable aid to the revival of the language, and we have already found it useful too in the actual teaching of Welsh in Wales.

Ten Thousand Pamphlets:

One of the channels in Wales offers a course in Welsh for learners. Ten thousand pamphlets were published to go with it and they were all sold in a very short time. An interesting feature of these programmes is that the course gives a new orientation to learning Welsh. It does not look back, hankering for an age that is gone. The learners acquire a knowledge of Welsh, not in order to visit an isolated chapel in the hills, not to sing hymns or to listen to folk tales, not to taste again the quaint peasant life from which their grand-parents escaped. The programme is presented in *a sophisticated setting*. It was condemned by some people for that reason, because continental holidays, wine drinking, buying fast cars and ultra modern clothes etc., happen all through the medium of the

Welsh language. That is the type of life that ordinary forward-looking people want in the twentieth century. If we are going to link the learning of Welsh or Irish with a return to the old *peasant way of life which our forefathers rejected, and rightly so*, we are not going to make any real progress in the coveted linguistic revival. The main character in this Welsh series, to which I have referred, is learning Welsh not so that she can go back to the country to visit her virtually monoglot Welsh-speaking grandmother but in order that *she can give Welsh as the first language to her own children in the capital city*. That is the aim she is looking to in faith that the national language will be necessary for living a complete life in Wales in the 21st Century. This is the outlook that we must develop if we are going to have an effective bilingual policy for school and nation.

Four Conditions:

I must now draw this lecture to a close by enumerating what I consider to be the basic conditions of achieving nationwide bilingualism before the end of this century.

1. The establishing of widespread opportunities for young children to acquire two vernaculars.
2. Effective methods of teaching both languages in primary and secondary schools, in particular effective teaching of the national language as a second language to *those who have missed the opportunity* of acquiring two vernaculars in early childhood.
3. Nationwide opportunities for adults to learn and to extend their knowledge of the national language by the establishment of classes all over the country, and by the use of new media, in particular television, and also programmed *learning and teaching machines*. Library services should include the lending of programmes for language learning and also the necessary teaching

machines. The public library service is already doing very valuable work in certain parts of Wales. I referred earlier to British Government support for publishing books in Welsh. The problem of distribution is equally important and has to be tackled. We are very fortunate in that we have a *library van service* that visits not only every village in the county but even isolated farm houses once a month. On such vans 50% of the books carried are in the Welsh language. That is an example of what a Local Authority can do.

4. We need the full support of the environment. The language needs to be brought out into the open, to be given a worthy place in official forms. It is of no use telling people that Welsh is useful in the Welsh Office in Cardiff, or Irish in the Civil Service in Dublin, if we have not got *bilingual forms that ordinary citizens are likely to fill* in either official language. The national language also needs strong support and extensive daily use on television and radio.

If these four conditions are met, I see no reason why at least 75% of the population of Wales and Ireland could not be bilingual by the end of the present century. This is a realistic aim, but we must seek to reach it in earnest. If we cannot face this problem seriously, and with strong determination, we should not waste time on it. I said at the beginning that I was once a lecturer in a Technical College, concerned with economics—I believe in production, not in waste and pointless effort. We have wasted a lot of time in Welsh schools pretending to teach Welsh. I am not in a position to know whether a similar statement would be true of Ireland. By now we know a great deal more than we used to about the nature of a sound bilingual policy and of effective teaching methods. With this new knowledge, we can solve our respective language problems.

If we do so not only can we serve our own nations well; we shall also be safeguarding for posterity an important part of the cultural heritage of Europe. At the same time, and this is very important in my view, we shall be giving a lead to the emergent nations of the world, so many of which are at this very moment looking towards the older Christian nations of Europe for guidance and for inspiration, as they face their own linguistic problems. It is our privilege as well as our duty to give them that guidance and leadership, to show them the way ahead by our example.



This pamphlet was not originally written as a paper but is a recorded version of a lecture given by Professor Jac L. Williams in the Intercontinental Hôtel, Dublin, on 21st January 1967, before an audience of over one thousand.

Professor Williams is a noted authority on education and bilingualism, and is Dean of the Faculty of Education at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. He has the unusual distinction for an educationalist and linguist of having qualified in Economics, Sociology and Public Administration. He has worked in industry and has lectured in Commerce and Economics at a Technological College, and spent ten years on the staff of Trinity College, Carmarthen.

A past President of the Association of Teachers of Wales, he is a member of several bodies concerned with education, including the Welsh Joint Education Committee, the Welsh Committee of the Schools Council, and the Schools Broadcasting Council of Wales, and is also a member of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales and of the Central Religious Advisory Council. A noted authority on bilingualism, he was Warden of the International Seminar on Bilingualism in Education, held under the auspices of UNESCO in 1960 and he has attended many international conferences on this subject.